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Authoritarian Party Structures in Turkey: A Comparison of the Republican People's Party and the Justice and Development Party

PELIN AYAN

Department of Political Science, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey

ABSTRACT *Authoritarianism within party structures is recognized as a central feature of all political parties in Turkey but used in a taken-for-granted manner. This article highlights the necessity to examine the power relationship between the central and local party actors and argues that the different incentive structures within political parties lead to different types of party authoritarianism. Comparing the incentive structures of the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Justice and Development Party (AKP), the article concludes that the CHP is close to an oligarchic type of authoritarianism whereas the AKP is close to a hegemonic type of authoritarianism.*

Introduction

One of the widely recognized features of party organizations in Turkey is the concentration of power at the central level. Several studies have elaborated on this basic feature under the labels of “oligarchic tendencies” of parties, “highly disciplined party leadership,” and “overly centralized structures” and underlined the macro-level causes of this phenomenon, such as Turkish political culture and institutional framework.¹ This article highlights the significance of micro-level explanations for authoritarian party structures by examining the power relationship between the central and local party actors. It argues that the differences in incentive structures lead to different patterns in party authoritarianism, an analysis that is not sufficiently revealed by macro-level explanations. Comparing the incentive structures between the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP) and the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP), this article shows that the CHP is close to an oligarchic type of authoritarianism and the AKP is close to a hegemonic type of authoritarianism.² In the former type, the voice of the local party actors is coercively dominated by the party leadership through

Correspondence Address: Pelin Ayan, Department of Political Science, Bilkent University, 06800 Bilkent Ankara, Turkey. Email: pekinay@bilkent.edu.tr.

negative incentives such as the threat of marginalization in the party. In the latter type, the local party activists remain indifferent to the authoritarian party structure as a result of receiving positive incentives that encourage their ideological commitment and loyalty to the party leader. Understanding such different patterns in authoritarian party structures in Turkey is functional in predicting the possibilities for transitions from party authoritarianism to internal party democracy in the future.

Conceptualization of Authoritarianism within Parties

There is a general consensus that the parties in Turkey mostly possess the characteristics of cadre parties, which are controlled by elite groups of party activists, rather than mass parties based on a carefully maintained membership registration system.³ Furthermore, the main source of income for political parties in Turkey since the 1971 constitutional amendment has been state subsidies,⁴ which make the parties resemble cartel parties in which the leaders use public financing and expanded state functions to restrain competition for power's sake.⁵ In terms of electoral strategies, some Turkish parties also show the features of catch-all parties whose major goal is to maximize electoral support, yet not through interest aggregation but primarily around election campaigns through candidate images.⁶

All these features imply the characteristics of centralized party structures in which party control is concentrated in the hands of party leaders.⁷ However, authoritarianism within parties incorporates but is not only formed by party centralization. There are two important features that make an authoritarian party structure different from a centralized party structure. First, it takes into account the exclusiveness of local party actors versus their inclusiveness in decision-making mechanisms in addition to the centralization of the locus of control. In this sense, party authoritarianism can be considered to have the opposite meaning of intraparty democracy.⁸ Secondly, party authoritarianism emphasizes the relational notion of power. A power relationship entails ties of interdependence between the actors.⁹

In other words, power is not something owned by the party leader. Rather, the party leader has power over the party activist because it is the values, skills, and perceptions of that activist that allows the party leader to influence him. In this respect, power becomes relational in party authoritarianism.

A commonly observed pattern within authoritarian party structures is the oligarchic control of the party organization by its leaders. For an organization to be considered an oligarchy the authority needs to be, firstly, in the hands of a minority; secondly, illegitimate; and thirdly, organized in a way that the wishes of the majority do not affect the decisions of the minority.¹⁰ The word legitimacy resides in a Weberian understanding, meaning that "[the] power is legitimate if and only if the people subjected to that power believe it to be."¹¹ In oligarchic authoritarianism, then, the local party activists do not believe in the legitimacy of the party leadership. Yet classifying all existing party organizations in Turkey within the definition of oligarchy is likely to produce certain problems. The definition leaves out parties where the minority with legitimate but hegemonic power might dominate the

organization. In other words, what if that legitimacy is maintained through controlling the contentment of local party activists by distributing positive organizational incentives that encourage loyalty to party leaders? What if the local party activists believe in the power of the party leaders only because they are made to believe in it?

In this respect, this study emphasizes that authoritarianism within parties can be maintained both by hegemonic or oligarchic means of power exertion. Before explaining the micro-level factors that cause such variance in the power structures of party organizations, first it is necessary to briefly outline how the macro-level factors—political culture and institutional framework—mold authoritarianism within party organizations in Turkey.

Party Authoritarianism in Turkey: Macro-Level Factors

Political Culture

Turkish political culture has a significant impact on the development of authoritarianism within parties in Turkey. The formation of the first political party of the Republic, the CHP, was similar to the path of the first parties in authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. It found its origins in “its protest against foreign enemies and absolutism, dealing less with seizing power than with redefining state boundaries and establishing new regimes,”¹² an effort highly controlled by the elite cadres consisting of military officials and civil servants. After the establishment of the Republic in 1923, the same elite cadres led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk founded the CHP, which became a political instrument to serve the general interest of the society and foster modernization in social and political life. Although Western-style competitive democracy was an important goal for the elite, there were hesitations to introduce a multiparty system in Turkey within the initial phase of the newly established Republic. Atatürk accepted, in principle, party competition, but not if it went too far, in other words, not if it led to group interest at the expense of the general interest.¹³ Thus, the CHP alone played the role of establishing a responsible, though not a responsive, political system in Turkey.¹⁴ The dominant position of the party elite became consolidated to protect the general interest, which was embedded in the Republic’s main principles, known as the six arrows.¹⁵

After the transition to the multiparty era in 1946, the newly emerged Democratic Party (Demokrat Parti, DP) ended the one-party rule of the CHP by winning the elections in 1950. Yet while the DP inherited the authoritarian organizational structure of the CHP, it failed to inherit the function of representing the general interest. The DP was born within a fragmented peripheral society with no strong social groups facilitating the development of group representation. Other later parties were also established autonomous from social groups.¹⁶ Instead, it was the particularistic interest representation, namely clientelism, which rose simultaneously with political participation in Turkey. As Güneş-Ayata argues, it is difficult to undermine the claim that clientelism has played a functional role in the development of party politics and political participation.¹⁷ The DP in 1950s and its follower, the Justice

Party (Adalet Partisi, AP), in the 1960s developed a wide network of clientelistic relations between the central and local party leaders.

The failure of representing the general interest had high costs for political parties in Turkey. The military, which had taken over the role of guarding the general interest, interrupted party politics in Turkey through the military interventions of 1960, 1971, and 1980, leading to the closure of several parties. Yet such closures led to no more than a change in the name and the label of each party. The organizational basis of the parties hardly changed since the same local party leaders through the unchanged clientelistic networks coordinated the parties on the ground. The power-seeking central party leaders later used these clientelistic networks to consolidate their position within the party.

Institutional Context

The Law on Political Parties (*Siyasi Partiler Kanunu* No. 2820) regulates the establishment and organization of political parties in Turkey. The activities of political parties were regulated by the Law of Associations until the mid 1960s. In 1965, the first law on political parties was adopted within the framework of the 1961 Constitution. The current law is the product of the 1982 Constitution, which was enacted after the 1980 military intervention. Several studies criticize the law and claim that it is a reason why party organizations cannot show healthy development in Turkey. It is usually underlined that the law strengthens the hierarchical party model and leaves little room for intraparty democracy.¹⁸ Yet the law's effect on party authoritarianism must be understood together with the features of Turkish political culture. When legal enforcements merge with the main characteristics of a party system based on clientelistic networks rather than social group representation, it becomes even harder to talk about intraparty democracy.

The law has three main effects on party authoritarianism. Firstly, it makes the parties dependent on state revenues and creates a cartelization effect. As the parties in government have the power to distribute and use state resources, the assumption that the parties in power have the greatest access to the state's financial resources, and donations from groups becomes stronger. Cartelization in this sense firms up the "stateness" of the parties, prohibits the development of alternative choices to voters, and undermines the equality of parties in competitive democracy.¹⁹ These circumstances, in turn, empower the anti-democratic structures of political parties, as the party leaders tend to care less about their accountability towards the party members than for trading on state resources.

The law's second negative effect is that it promotes the exclusiveness of the process of candidate selection in political parties. Candidate selection is one of the central defining functions of a political party in a democracy, and how it is managed is an important indicator of the degree of democracy within a party.²⁰ The current practice in almost all parties in Turkey is to have candidates selected by the central executive committee, where the weight of the party leader is paramount. According to the law, it is up to the central party committee to decide whether to organize

primaries at the local level or to use the method of central voting in determining candidate lists for parliament.²¹ Many parties, in this respect, choose to determine candidates based on the central party organization's decision, which restricts the rights of the local party activists to participate in the organization's decision-making process. Thus, the law leaves the most significant function of political parties, candidate selection, in the hands of the party leader.

Thirdly, the law regulates all the organizational characteristics of the parties, creating a standardized organizational model consisting of party conventions and elected executive committees at the national, provincial, and district levels. It identifies the function of internal party branches and defines the methods of intraparty elections at all levels. In this respect, the law limits the alternative models of party organizational structures, encouraging the development of a single hierarchical party model, to which all political parties must be subject.²²

The Law on Political Parties sets the institutional background of party authoritarianism through its effects based on cartelization, exclusiveness of the candidate selection process, and the single hierarchical party model. However, the party actors still have a key role in shaping authoritarian structures at the micro level, as it is they who filter the institutional effect by interpreting the law in an anti-democratic manner.

Authoritarian Party Structures: (Actor-Centered) Micro-Level Factors

One of the main goals of the central party leaders is to consolidate their power within party organizations.²³ Yet the implicit treatment of power as though it were an attribute of a person or group is a repeated flaw in common conceptions of power. Understanding authoritarian parties in this form foresees an intransitive power relation within their structures. In other words, the statement that "the party leader has power" is vacant unless "over whom" is specified. Therefore, power must be treated as a property of the social relation, not as an attribute of the actor.²⁴ In party authoritarianism, the party leader has power over the local party activists only because it is their values, perceptions, and skills that allow the party leader to influence them.

In order to achieve their power-seeking goals, party leaders have to appeal to the perceptions and motivations of the rank-and-file by distributing organizational incentives. There are usually three main incentives for the members of a party organization: material incentives, in the form of either monetary proposals or concrete offers for higher positions; solidary incentives, conferring prestige, status, or social approval; and purposive incentives, attained through the achievement of certain goals imputed to the organization itself.²⁵ Material, purposive, and solidary incentives can be considered positive incentives in the form of tangible and intangible awards offered to those who act in the group interest. In addition to positive incentives, this article also considers the role that negative incentives play in authoritarian party structures. Negative incentives are in the form of a punishment for those who fail to bear an allocated share of costs of the group action.²⁶

Material incentives form the basis of the clientelistic networks in Turkey, strengthening authoritarianism within party structures. These incentives are, in Panebianco's words, selective incentives, concrete organizational benefits that party leaders distribute only to some activists in varying amounts.²⁷ In Turkey, material incentives are usually distributed to local leaders of district party organizations. Selection of delegates and local party chairs in district party conventions are two significant examples of how material incentives work to this end.

The district party convention (*ilçe kongresi*) is comprised, at most, of 400 selected delegates. Delegate selection is assigned to the registered party members according to the law, and any member may be appointed to carry out the selection process in each village or neighborhood.²⁸ In other words, the law does not require formal delegate elections for the district party conventions and leaves the other organizational details of the selection process to the party constitutions. In practice, the delegate selection process is mostly undertaken under the control of the district party organization's leadership circle, which, in fact, works as the agent of the central party leaders as a result of the material incentives they receive. Thus, the person appointed to carry out the selection process in each neighborhood is mostly a member of the local clientelistic network and seeks to find delegates in favor of the local party leader. One district party organization member interviewed explained this problem as follows:

Basically, it is the district party leader who determines the delegates in the conventions. Prior to the conventions, the delegates are invited to dinners and feasts in a way to guarantee the vote. The elections during the conventions take place in line with the party constitutions and the law because they are controlled by the district election boards. It is the process before the conventions that cause trouble.²⁹

Another example on how material incentives operate is found in the process of selecting the executive committee members of the district and provincial party organizations who must be elected in the local conventions according to the law.³⁰ Yet in practice what is usually experienced is different: they are appointed by the central party committee and then elected at the convention. Thus, in the period between the appointment and the election of the local party leader, the appointed local leader looks for the delegates whose vote will be guaranteed in the convention.

A provincial party chair explained the process of how he was brought to his current position as follows:

After our previous provincial chair resigned as he had declared his candidacy for the upcoming parliamentary elections, five people in the party demanded the position of chairmanship for the provincial party organization. They were interviewed by the central party committee. I was one of them and later on appointed to this position.³¹

As this example shows, the central party leaders determine their own methods of selecting the appropriate local chairs rather than leaving the decision to party members. The appointed local chairs guarantee the power of the central party leaders through acquiring material incentives. A district vice-chair explained how he came to his present situation is another example is to this end: "It was the district party chair's decision to appoint me to the position of vice chairmanship. He considered who was more qualified in dealing with the issues of organizational administration and chose me."³²

These examples show the essence of the relationship between the central and local party leaders based on material incentives. Yet distributing material incentives is highly costly for the party leaders, and not all parties have access to the same amount of material resources (i.e. political appointments, state subventions). Contrary to the parties in government, the parties in opposition have restricted resources to generate internal support based on distribution of material incentives.³³ In this respect, the party leaders must use different strategies to deal with potential reactions coming from the local party members who are outside of the clientelistic network: they either distribute negative incentives to repress different voices or solidary and purposive incentives to keep the local members indifferent to authoritarianism and loyal to the leader.

The CHP and the AKP are two opposite examples in terms of their incentive structures in Turkey. The CHP leadership, leading the opposition in public office, received the reaction of local party leaders and members after the 2007 national elections in Turkey. The leadership, in turn, has clung to repression through the use of negative incentives. As the AKP is the party in governmental office, the extent of material incentives distributed to local leaders is higher than that in the CHP. The rest of the rank-and-file, on the other hand, is indifferent to the authoritarian party structure as a consequence of receiving other types of positive incentives: solidary and purposive. The variance in the incentive structures of these two parties, thus, creates different patterns in party authoritarianism: oligarchic and hegemonic.

Authoritarianism within the CHP Organization

The first two leaders of the CHP, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and İsmet İnönü, had charismatic personalities, maintaining a strong control of the party organization at the central level. Yet the party's continual defeat in elections from 1950 until 1961 as well as developments in domestic politics led to a major change within the party, facilitating intraparty democracy. The defeat in the 1965 elections was particularly important since it fostered discussions among all party members questioning the reasons for the defeat and what could be done.³⁴ Bülent Ecevit's leadership in 1970s empowered the local party organizations in decision-making processes, shifting the power from the center to the periphery.³⁵

The 1980 military intervention had a devastating effect on the CHP, like all political parties of the pre-1980 era. All parties were closed down and the previous party leaders were banned from politics. A new party under the name of the Social

Democracy Party (Sosyal Demokrasi Partisi, SODEP) was established to appeal to the CHP support base in 1983. It was led by Erdal İnönü and later on merged with the People's Party (Halkçı Parti, HP) becoming the Social Democratic People's Party (Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti, SHP). Ecevit did not take part in these developments. After 1987 he led his own party, the Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti, DSP), in which he restricted the rights of the local organizations.³⁶

Following the removal of the ban on the political parties the CHP was re-established in 1992, electing Deniz Baykal as its new leader, and it merged with the SHP in 1995. Baykal had served as the Minister of Finance in 1974 during Ecevit's government and led the opposition movement within the SHP against İnönü. Following his election as the leader of the CHP, he pursued a leadership marginalizing the role of local party organizations in decision-making processes both in candidate selection and in programmatic or ideological debates. Since then, whenever there was a clear voice that questioned Baykal and his leadership circle, the means of control have been highly coercive. In return, the local party members lost their belief in the party leadership, which caused an illegitimate, oligarchic type of authoritarianism within the CHP. The analysis of the CHP's national party convention that took place in 2008 provides important insight to understand how such authoritarianism occurs within the party.

The delegate selection process for the national party convention had to take place following the CHP's defeat in the parliamentary elections on July 22, 2007, when several leaders of the provincial and district party organizations revealed their dissatisfaction with the central party policies and the Baykal administration. One of the most representative public opinion surveys on the parliamentary elections demonstrated that among the CHP voters the percentage of the people who recognized the need for a new party and the need for a new leader in solving Turkey's problems was 34.8 percent and 59.6 percent respectively.³⁷ The distrust for the Baykal administration was therefore evident among voters. Following the outbreak of this distrust, a new faction within the party emerged under the leadership of the Şişli mayor, Mustafa Sarıgül, who, after the parliamentary elections, began making statements in the media about his intentions to be the next CHP party leader and sharply condemned the Baykal administration for the CHP's failure in elections.³⁸ He attempted to gather all the CHP opposition members under his leadership and organized backdoor meetings with the provincial and district party chairs whose roles had been marginalized in the party.³⁹ However, Sarıgül soon was expelled from the party by decision of the party disciplinary committee.

The administrative boards of the local party organizations, which objected to the decisions of the central party administration, also suffered for their opposing stance by being marginalized within the party. One of the examples was the CHP's provincial party organization in Istanbul (CHP-Istanbul), whose chair and cadres were removed from their positions soon after the parliamentary elections. A reason for the rapid removal of the provincial party leaders in Istanbul was the CHP-Istanbul's strategic importance. Its influence was greater than other provincial organizations on the upcoming national party convention where the number of delegates

representing each province was proportional to the results of the parliamentary elections.⁴⁰ One of the delegates at the Istanbul provincial convention explained it as follows:

The results of the provincial party convention in Istanbul will be 90 percent the same as the results of the national party convention. One sixth of the number of delegates who will vote for the CHP party leader in the national convention is elected here.⁴¹

Therefore, the central party organization appointed a new provincial chair to CHP-Istanbul who would guarantee the reelection of Baykal as the party leader in the upcoming national convention by making up his own team of supporters. Thus, three months before the national convention, the Istanbul provincial convention did not go beyond holding a formal election for the informally appointed chair. The majority of the delegates had already declared their written support for the appointed chair prior to the convention.⁴²

The Istanbul provincial organization was not the only organization that was subject to radical changes and replacements. The provincial party organization in Izmir (CHP-Izmir), which had provided a strong support base for the CHP votes in 2002 and, to a diminishing extent, in the 2007 parliamentary elections, was another example for the subjugation to the coercive strategies of the central party organization. The resistance of CHP-Izmir against the central administration after the 2007 parliamentary elections brought about its own dissolution by being replaced with a new provincial administration in favor of Baykal and his leadership circle. The newly appointed provincial chair restructured not only the provincial administration cadre but also many of the cadres in district party administrations. The district leaders subject to marginalization protested against this change by gathering and unfurling banners titled "Our only fault has been to be with the CHP," which received great attention from the local media.⁴³

As a result of several removals in the party, the delegates, who were to elect the CHP's leader in the national party convention, were selected from the informally appointed local party administrations that were in favor of the incumbent central administration. Moreover, Deniz Baykal was not only reelected as the party leader but also the only candidate nominated to run for the party leadership. The other three candidates were not able to receive the support of a total of 253 delegates required for nomination to party leadership.⁴⁴ Yet 1,016 out of 1,213 delegates in the national convention supported Baykal as the nominee for the CHP leadership.⁴⁵

An important reason for the CHP to have such a coercive pattern of authoritarianism, observed in the 2008 national convention process, is based on its position of being an opposition party. The CHP acted as the main opposition party in the parliament in the 2002–2007 term when the AKP was the single party in government. In times of opposition, the party leaders may be more easily challenged by the local party activists because their access to power resources such as state subventions and governmental positions is restricted.⁴⁶ Therefore, the distribution of material

incentives is very limited. In order to maintain their legitimacy in the party, the leaders are expected to replace the capital with the valuation of effectiveness, control productivity in the party, and respond to the structured demands of the local activists. However, as the case of the CHP illustrates, in authoritarian party structures the party leaders may choose to use negative incentives for their power-seeking aims at the expense of legitimacy.

If coercion within a party organization reaches this level, it is plausible to ask what would continue to motivate a local party member to actively work for the party. For instance, one of the ex-provincial chairs of the CHP stated upon his removal that his administration never engaged in behavior that would do harm to the party itself and that their struggle would continue to be within the CHP organization.⁴⁷ Furthermore, one of the local party members made the following statement about the CHP:

I was a member of the SHP before the merger between the CHP and the SHP. I strongly believe in the principles of the Kemalist doctrine, secularism, and republicanism.... There is authoritarianism within the CHP but my beliefs are represented only in the CHP. I do not think any other party is closer to me than the CHP.⁴⁸

Another local CHP member explained his motivations to be within the CHP as follows:

Between the years 1997–1999, I was affiliated with a radical left-wing party but then I realized that for my struggle to be meaningful and legal, I changed my affiliation and began to work for the CHP.... I think that the CHP is an unsuccessful party. We need a democratic structure to be successful and appeal to the people. Within the current structure, our opinions are not valued. The reason why we are here today is because we have an emotional bond with the party, not because we approve the current party administration.⁴⁹

Another statement from a different local party member, showing his attachment to the CHP is as follows:

The candidate selection process is anti-democratic in our party. We are not satisfied with this process as well as with the selected candidates but since they are the candidates of our party, we must support them. By the same token, whoever the leader of our party is, we will continue to work and vote for the CHP.⁵⁰

These exemplary statements show that the rank-and-file of the CHP are holders of strong ideological motivations. The negative incentives—the threat of marginalization—do not deter them from being members of the party. Many party members do not believe in the party leadership but rather in the party ideology. Thus the

authoritarianism within the CHP has an oligarchic nature; the power of the central party elite is illegitimate and maintained through the supply of negative incentives to the local party members who are ideologically attached to the party.

Authoritarianism within the AKP Organization

The only party that deviated from the patterns of cadre, catch-all, and cartel parties in the Turkish party system is the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP), one of the predecessors of the AKP. The RP, led by Necmettin Erbakan,⁵¹ was composed of very strong grassroots organizations and emphasized the community and family aspects as well as the religious values of society.⁵² Not only did the party have strong ties with the local volunteer groups and organizations but the strong ideological attachments of its members made the RP resemble a mass-party model.

When the RP was in power as a part of the one-year-long coalition with the True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi, DYP), Erbakan was accused of undermining the Republic's principle of secularism and was forced to resign by the military-dominated National Security Council in 1997. The RP, closed down by the decision of the Constitutional Court, was then replaced by the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi, FP) with the same support base but a new leader, Recai Kutan, who was Erbakan's loyal friend. It was when some reformist cadres within the FP emphasized the need for a modern party identity that the party split into two main factions. The traditional faction supported the idea of sustaining the communitarian dimension of the party whereas the reformist faction wanted to build a modern type of conservative party. The AKP was formed by this reformist faction within the FP under the leadership of Tayyip Erdoğan, the former mayor of Istanbul. In the 2002 national elections, the newly founded AKP, by gaining 34.5 percent of the votes and dealing a severe blow to parties that were in power in a coalition government, emerged as the dominant party in Turkish politics. The AKP's power *vis-à-vis* the other parties, particularly the main opposition party, the CHP, was also reassured in the 2007 national elections in which the party received the 46.7 percent of the votes.

The AKP rejected its bonds with the RP and the FP, identifying its ideology as the modern version of "conservative democracy." Based on an interview conducted with the vice-chair of the AKP, Özbudun asserts that the AKP party members do not have the same ideological motivations as RP members had.⁵³ He also argues that the high number of registered members in the party is what makes the party similar to a mass-party model.⁵⁴ However, resemblance to a mass party model does not necessarily bring intraparty democracy. As in all Turkish political parties, the central party leaders within the AKP exercise paramount influence within the whole organization although the AKP party constitution brings forth three methods of candidate selection: primaries, organizational enquiry, and central enquiry. Organizational enquiry (*temayül yoklaması*) takes place when the central party committee asks the opinions of the local party organizations about the candidates, but it is still the center that makes the final decision. Central enquiry (*merkez yoklaması*) is, on the other hand, less open to the opinions of the local branches. Furthermore, it is once

again the central committee that decides which method of candidate selection is to be used in the districts and provinces.⁵⁵

The AKP determined its candidates for the 2007 national elections mainly through the methods of organizational and central enquiry. However, contrary to the CHP elite's strategy of coercion to dominate the decisions, the AKP elite did not need to repress any voices since the party members were usually indifferent to authoritarianism. Rather, a number of positive incentives (material, solidary, purposive) given to the local party members helped consolidate authoritarianism within the party. An important reason why these incentives work successfully in the case of the AKP is the party's access to significant power resources, in contrast to the CHP case. Having acquired governmental office as a single party after both the 2002 and 2007 elections, the AKP has control over the most important public offices. The party also receives the highest financial share from the state subventions due to the high proportion of the votes it received in these elections. Allocating 30 percent of the party budget to the local party organizations and thus creating another great material incentive for the local party chairs,⁵⁶ the authoritarianism further becomes consolidated within the AKP. As for the other local party members, solidary and purposive incentives are sufficient for being loyal to the party leader. The opinions of members on the candidate selection process provide important insights in this regard. For example, one district party member stated that:

Of course, our party leader should have the weight in the candidate selection process. We would not be working for the party unless we believed in our leader's decisions. I have not been affiliated with any party until the AKP. Our leader and his perspectives are the reasons for why we are here today.⁵⁷

Another district party member did not hesitate to criticize the AKP's candidate selection process but his thoughts on authoritarianism within the AKP were surprisingly at odds with his statement on candidate selection:

I really hope to see primaries in the future in candidate selection processes. In the last election, the candidate supported by our district was placed in the 24th rank in the list of the MP candidates although the party gained 55 per cent of the votes in this district. As a result of this high percentage, we think it is our right to decide on the rankings among the candidates.... I do not think authoritarianism is present in our party. Our leader values our opinions. If we particularly compare our party with other parties, ours is democratic, we complete opinion surveys that are evaluated.⁵⁸

The agenda of the surveys that the local party members complete within the AKP varies from candidate selection issues to other strategic party decisions. For instance, regarding the surveys about the parliamentary candidates in the 2007 national elections, another member explained the content as follows:

The surveys that the central party committee carried out during the candidate selection process contained questions like what a parliamentarian should be like and where he or she should be from. There were no suggestions or names of the possible MP candidates on the surveys. But the central party committee took our thoughts into consideration, and I am happy with the results.⁵⁹

According to these statements, the central party leaders make the final decision on the candidate selection issues within the party organization. However, the survey technique provides solidary incentives to the local party members as it makes them feel more involved in the party decisions and think that their opinions are valued, no matter how influential the surveys are.

Another solidary incentive that the party leadership provides to local members is the sense of being a part of the process to serve to the country. Here are some typical statements by party members in this regard:

I did not have any relations with a party before the AKP. One day, I witnessed the speech of our prime minister on television; he made a call to us stating that we should all come together, working for one end. I asked myself, "Why should I not be with the AKP?" Since then, I have worked as a party member within the AKP. It has been three years. Besides, it is a party of service and I want to be a part of this service for the country.⁶⁰

The AKP serves a country that was on the edge of falling from a cliff. I do not support any ideology. I do not think the party has any ideology. I even do not see it as a party, it is an entity established to serve the people. This is the reason why I work for the AKP today.⁶¹

I believe that the AKP is the only party that works for the benefit of the country. Its cadres are full of potential. It offers concrete projects and spends effort to achieve the goal of civilization. It has not confronted any failures yet. The social and economic activities that the party carries out have always been successful.⁶²

The reason why I became a party member is easy to explain. It strengthens human relations, first of all. Being a party member is more effective than being a member of a non-governmental organization in terms of these human relations. My daily schedule is always full. And the AKP's vision overlaps with my motivation.⁶³

I have been a member of this party since its establishment in 2001. I did not have any affiliation with any party before. The reason why I chose the AKP is that I had sympathy for the party leader. When Erdoğan established his own party, I personally wanted to take part in this initiative and get involved in his party's effort.⁶⁴

In fact, it was the party leadership that popularized the term “service for the country” inside and outside the party. During the 2007 electoral campaigns, the AKP emphasized its identity as being a “service party” by repeatedly underlining the slogan, “Let’s continue the journey without ceasing!”⁶⁵ and underlining its record of economic stabilization as well as infrastructure development in rural areas.⁶⁶ On the other hand, local women activists’ close ties with the charity organizations through the party further increase their sense of serving the poor and the disadvantaged people.⁶⁷ Thus, the local party members are usually content with the solidary incentives such as filling out party surveys and “serving the country,” which they see as the benefits provided and made possible by the party leaders. Yet this contentment leads to a lack of concern among those who make the decisions in the party. In this respect, the authoritarianism within the AKP is not illegitimate yet close to a hegemonic type of authoritarianism where the majority shows consent to the domination of the minority.

Conclusion

Understanding the power structures of party organizations is essential in assessing the quality of democracy in a political system. Yet due to the taken-for-granted nature of authoritarianism within party organizations in Turkey, internal power structures of parties have received little attention. This article has suggested that it is necessary to pay attention to the micro-level dynamics within party organizations to understand different patterns of authoritarian power structures and even the potentials for transition from party authoritarianism to intraparty democracy.

At the macro level, party authoritarianism is embedded in Turkey’s political culture and institutional framework. Local party activists are subordinate to decisions made by party leaders in candidate selection and policy formulation processes even if these decisions are contrary to their interests. Yet it is also possible to see different patterns of authoritarianism—hegemonic and oligarchic—across parties as elaborated in the cases of the AKP and the CHP.

In order to explain this difference, this article has emphasized the need to treat the concept of power as a relational phenomenon in authoritarian party structures.⁶⁸ In other words, power is not something that is owned by the party leader but exists in the relationship between the dominating (party leader) and the subordinate actors (party activist). The dominating leaders must take into account the perceptions and motivations of the subordinate activists to pursue their power-seeking aims. These motivations are the basis for different incentive structures within the parties, affecting the nature of the power relationship.⁶⁹ In the oligarchic type of authoritarianism, as observed in the CHP case, the activists who are motivated in challenging party authoritarianism receive negative incentives and are therefore subject to marginalization. In the hegemonic type of authoritarianism, as observed in the AKP case, the activists are indifferent to the power structure and far from challenging the authoritarian behavior of the party leaders because of receiving sufficient amounts of positive (material, purposive, and solidary) incentives.

Given this analysis, two final questions with future implications are raised: Is it possible to foresee any possible exits from authoritarian party structures? Which pattern of authoritarianism is more likely to develop into a democratic party structure? First of all, it seems that electoral defeats and being in the opposition generate a trigger for change in parties' incentive structures. For instance, following the electoral defeat in 2007, the legitimacy of the CHP leader declined in the eyes of the party activists in Turkey. As the party in opposition, on the other hand, the CHP leadership did not have sufficient material resources to control the internal support. Unsatisfied with the elite cadres of the party organization, the party activists had the motive to challenge the authoritarianism. Such an attempt in an authoritarian party structure has the potential to develop into a democratic one because the process involves a trigger for change. Yet the CHP case has shown that the party activists who initiated the challenge against the top leadership were subject to marginalization by removal from their power positions in the party. The coercion exerted by the leadership through negative incentives, in turn, strengthened the oligarchic control of the party organization, leaving no possible chance for democratization.

Contrary to oligarchic authoritarianism, the hegemonic type of authoritarianism does not contain a trigger for change. The submission of the party activists is either purchased through material incentives or maintained by solidary and purposive incentives that strengthen commitment to the party leader. It is not possible to see any observable conflict between the party leaders and the party activists in hegemonic authoritarianism. For instance, receiving the majority of votes and acting as the single party in government after the 2002 and 2007 elections in Turkey, the AKP had great access to material resources, which were allocated to the local chairs and leaders in several district party organizations, leaving no incentive to challenge the authoritarian nature of the candidate selection process during the 2007 national elections. Similarly, the local activists did not question the process as a result of receiving solidary and purposive incentives, which persuaded them to be loyal to the leader's decisions within the party. The indifference of the activists toward power structures thus makes the chances for internal party democratization less likely.

Even though the differences in the incentive structures lead to different patterns of party authoritarianism, neither of these patterns is likely to produce internal party democracy in Turkey in the near future. Internal party democracy is likely to emerge in structures where conflicting interests between the party actors are present and the party leaders respond to these conflicts in a compromising manner. Yet the coercive behavior of the party leadership in the CHP and the absence of conflicting interests in the AKP fail to provide these sufficient conditions.

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author's own contribution. The author is also grateful to the helpful comments received from Assistant Prof. Dr. Zeki Sarıgil as well as from Nazlı Şenses, Ahu Yiğit, and the anonymous reviewer.

Notes

1. See for instance İlter Turan, "Political Parties and the Party System in Post-1983 Turkey," in Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (eds.), *State, Democracy and the Military Turkey in the 1980s* (New York: W. de Gruyter, 1988), pp. 63–80; Ergun Özbudun, "Parties and Party System," in Ergun Özbudun (ed.), *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), pp. 73–103.
2. The argument relies on research based on in-depth interviews with 27 local party members from the AKP and 28 local party members from the CHP that took place in the district party organizations of both parties in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Diyarbakır, and Mersin from August to October 2007. Out of respect to the interviewees' wishes, their names will not be provided in this study. This article covers the AKP's and the CHP's records from November 2002 to May 2007.
3. For the distinction between cadre and mass parties, see Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (London: Methuen and CO Ltd., 1963), pp. 60–67. For the discussion on party types in Turkey, see Arsev Bektaş, *Demokratikleşme Sürecinde Liderler Oligarşisi, CHP ve AP (1961–1980)* [Leaders' Oligarchy in the Process of Democratization, the CHP and the AP] (Istanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 1993); Özbudun, "Parties and Party System," pp. 73–104.
4. Ergun Özbudun, "The Institutional Decline of Parties in Turkey," in Larry Diamond and R. Gunther (eds.), *Political Parties and Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 245.
5. Richard Katz and Peter Mair, "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy," *Party Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1995), pp. 5–28.
6. For a detailed elaboration of catch-all parties see Otto Kirchheimer, "The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems," in Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 177–200.
7. The most important feature of a centralized party is concentration of leadership in the hands of a few persons or of a single powerful figure. See Kenneth Janda, *A Conceptual Framework for the Comparative Analysis of Political Parties* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1970), pp. 108–109.
8. For the definition of intraparty democracy see Lars Bille, "Democratizing a Democratic Procedure: Myth or Reality? Candidate Selection in Western European Parties, 1960–1990," *Party Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2001), pp. 363–380.
9. For the discussion on the role of interdependence in a power relationship see David Baldwin, "Power Analysis and World Politics: New Trends versus Old Tendencies," *World Politics* Vol. 31, No. 2 (1979), p. 176; Peter M. Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964), pp. 118–125; and Richard M. Emerson, "Power-Dependence Relations," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (1962), pp. 31–40.
10. Darcy K. Leach, "The Iron Law of What Again? Conceptualizing Oligarchy across Organizational Forms," *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (2005), p. 329.
11. Ibid.
12. See Dankwart A. Rustow, "The Development of Parties in Turkey," in Joseph LaPalombara and M. Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 112.
13. Clement H. Dodd, "Atatürk and Political Parties," in Metin Heper and Jacob M. Landau (eds.), *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1991), pp. 24–42.
14. Kemal Karpat, "The Republican People's Party 1923–1945," in Metin Heper and Jacob M. Landau (eds.), *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1991), pp. 42–64.

15. The six arrows are republicanism, secularism, reformism, étatism, nationalism, and populism. According to Özbudun, the six arrows represent a positivist mentality and are a pragmatic instrument for progress and civilization. See Ergun Özbudun, "The Nature of the Kemalist Regime," in Ali Kazancıgil and Ergun Özbudun (eds.), *Atatürk: Founder of a Modern State* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1981), pp. 79–102.
16. Metin Heper, *State Tradition in Turkey* (Walkington: The Eothen Press, 1985), p. 100.
17. Ayşe Güneş-Ayata, "Class and Clientelism in the Republican People's Party," in Andrew Finkel and Nühket Sirman (eds.), *Turkish State, Turkish Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 160.
18. For an evaluation of the law's weaknesses see Ömer F. Gençkaya, "The Turkish Constitutional Court and Dissolution of Political Parties: Comparative Perspectives," in *Prof. Dr. Suna Kili'ye Armağan* (Istanbul: Bogaziçi University, 1998), pp. 165–184; and Ali Çarkoğlu, Tarhan Erdem, Mehmet Kabasakal and Ömer F. Gençkaya, *Siyasi Partilerde Reform* [Reform in Political Parties] (Istanbul: TESEV Yayınları, 2000), as well as Yusuf Ş. Hakyemez and Birol Akgün, "Limitations On The Freedom Of Political Parties In Turkey and the Jurisdiction of the European Court Of Human Rights," *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (2002), pp. 54–78.
19. See Ömer F. Gençkaya, "Siyasetin Finansmanı ve Siyasi Partiler," [Finance of Politics and Political Parties], in *Asomedyä* (October 2002).
20. For the vitality of candidate selection in political parties see Elmer Schattschneider, *Party Government* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1942), p. 64; James Jupp, *Political Parties* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 58.
21. Article No 37 of the Law on Political Parties No. 2820 leaves the candidate selection method to the constitutions of the political parties. *Siyasi Partiler Kanunu* [Law on Political Parties, hereafter LPP], <http://www.anayasa.gen.tr/2820sk.htm> [accessed May 30, 2008].
22. Section II of the LPP describes a detailed organizational party structure by which all parties must be composed.
23. Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracies* (New York: Free Press, 1962 [1911]); Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 7.
24. See Emerson, "Power-Dependence Relations," p.32.
25. These types of incentives are based on the widely recognized Clark-Wilson categorization of organizational incentives in the party politics literature. See Peter B. Clark and James Q. Wilson, "Incentive Systems: A Theory of Organization," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1961), pp. 129–166.
26. For a detailed elaboration of positive and negative incentives, see Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action, Public Goods, and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).
27. Panebianco, *Political Parties*, p. 9.
28. LPP, Article No. 20.
29. Interview with a local party member, Ankara, August 30, 2007.
30. Article No. 21/9 of the LPP states that the district party chair and the district executive committee are elected via the district party convention. The means of their election, the conditions that lead to their dismissal by the provincial committee or by the central executive committee, and the means of establishing an interim executive committee are designated in the party constitution. Article No. 19/5 introduces the same procedure for the election of the provincial party chairs.
31. Interview with a local party member, Diyarbakır, September 28, 2007.
32. Interview with a local party member, Istanbul, October 17, 2007.
33. Nicole Bolleyer, "Inside the Cartel Party: Party Organization in Government and Opposition," *Political Studies*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (2009), pp. 559–579.
34. Ayşe Güneş-Ayata and Sencer Ayata, "Center-Left Parties in Turkey," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (2007), p. 227.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 228.

36. Ibid.
37. The research company KONDA carried out this survey within a six-month period in eight series among more than 25,000 respondents and published its report one week before the parliamentary elections on July 22, 2007. "Sandığın İçindekini ne Belirledi?" [What Determined what is Inside the Ballot Box?] www.konda.com.tr [accessed April 10, 2008].
38. Mansur Çelik, "Muhalliflerden Sert çıkış: Siyaseti Bırak," [Harsh Riot by the Opposition: Leave Politics] *Milliyet*, July 25, 2007, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2007/07/25/siyaset/siy03.html> [accessed April 15, 2008].
39. Interview with an ex-chair of one of the CHP provincial organizations, September 29, 2007.
40. According to the Article 53 of the CHP party constitution the elected members of the national party convention are comprised of the representatives elected in the provincial conventions and the number of the elected representatives in each province is twice more as the provincial members of the Grand National Assembly. See *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Tüzüğü*, http://www.chp.org.tr/index.php?module=chpmain&page=list_party_info&info_id=73&pid=147 [accessed March 30, 2008].
41. The delegate who made this statement was also one of the ex-administrators of the provincial party organization. Quoted in Timur Soykan, "Parti İçü Demokrasiyi CHP'de Ara ki Bulasın!" [Look for Intraparty Democracy within the CHP as if You Will Find It], *Radikal*, January 28, 2008, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=245625> [accessed 20 April 2008].
42. Ibid.
43. "CHP Ege Örgütleri Ayaklandı," [The Aegean CHP Organizations Revolt] *Yeniasır Gazetesi*, October 5, 2007, p. 6.
44. Article 55/11 of the CHP constitution states that in order to run as a nominee for the party leadership the written support of at least 20 percent of absolute convention members is required. See *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Tüzüğü*, http://www.chp.org.tr/index.php?module=chpmain&page=list_party_info&info_id=73&pid=147 [accessed March 30, 2008].
45. The nomination process was also criticized in Altan Öymen, "Gizli Oylamanın Temelindeki 'Apaçık Oylama,'" [The Explicit Voting Underlying the Secret Voting] *Radikal*, April 29, 2008, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=254294> [accessed April 30, 2008].
46. Bolleyer, "Inside the Cartel Party."
47. The statement was made by CHP-Balıkesir's ex-provincial chair. See "CHP Ege Örgütleri Ayaklandı."
48. Interview with a local party member from the CHP, İstanbul, October 13, 2007.
49. Interview with a local party member from the CHP, Ankara, September 13, 2007.
50. Interview with a local party member from the CHP, İstanbul, October 19, 2007.
51. Erbakan previously served as the leader of the National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi, MNP) and the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP), both of which were based on the National Outlook Movement that reflected a mentality of religious order established in 1969. The RP is the successor of the MNP and the MSP, both of which were closed down by the military interventions in 1971 and 1981, respectively.
52. Ergün Yıldırım, Hüsamettin İnaç and Hayrettin Özler, "A Sociological Representation of the Justice and Development Party: Is It a Political Design or a Political Becoming?" *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (March 2007), p. 7.
53. Ergun Özbudun, "From Political Islam to Conservative Democracy: The Case of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey," *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2006), p. 552.
54. Ibid.
55. See Article 124 of the AKP Constitution. *Ak Parti Tüzüğü*, <http://www.akparti.org.tr/tuzuk.asp?dizin=168&hangisi=2> [accessed March 31, 2008].
56. See Article 134/8 of the AKP Constitution, *Ak Parti Tüzüğü*, <http://www.akparti.org.tr/tuzuk.asp?dizin=193&hangisi=2> [accessed March 31, 2008].
57. Interview with a local party member from the AKP, Diyarbakır, September 28, 2007.
58. Interview with a local party member from the AKP, İstanbul, October 17, 2007.

59. Interview with a different local party member from the AKP, Istanbul , October 17, 2007.
60. Interview with a local representative of the women wings from the AKP, Diyarbakır, September 29, 2007.
61. Interview with a district executive committee member of the AKP, Istanbul, October 17, 2007.
62. Interview with one of the AKP's local party leaders, Ankara, August 20, 2007.
63. Interview with a local representative of the women wings from the AKP, Ankara, August 21, 2007.
64. Interview with one of the district executive committee members of the AKP, Istanbul , October 17, 2007.
65. The motto "*Durmak Yok Yola Devam*" appeared on every AKP campaign brochure and poster during the 2007 national elections.
66. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), "Election Assessment Mission Report: Republic of Turkey Early Parliamentary Elections 22 July 2007," p.14.
67. Many interviewed local party members from the women wings of the AKP stated that their priority in the party was to listen to the needs of the local community. On the other hand, they were less interested in the decision-making processes.
68. Power is elaborated as a relational notion similar to the conceptual framework used in Emerson, "Power-dependence Relations"; Baldwin, "Power Analysis and World Politics: New Trends versus Old Tendencies"; and Robert Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (1957), pp. 201–215.
69. "Incentives structure" as an explanatory framework for different patterns of authoritarianism in this article is derived from the studies of Clark and Wilson, "Incentive Systems" and Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action, Public Goods, and the Theory of Groups*.